

A Nocturne for Ukraine

Irpin's auditorium is packed with chairs, it's full
of bricks and dust, twisted bones of blackened beams.

Pianist and page-turner sit outside. The piano stands
haloed in patterned brick that's slightly broken, the audience

newsmen who hold up smartphones. A few daffodils,
birches and a Christmas spruce, are ghosts of a garden where

people once strolled in the interval. A pink pushchair
with plastic toys is parked near burnt-out cars and cast-off curls

of corrugated iron. The front portico stands, as if unaware
all's smashed behind. Darius bows, and lets the keys

lament with energy and hope. *My speech is music*
say his fingers. This nocturne's a beautiful piece

of night. We hear it sing for Mariupol, the shelled theatre, its roof
gone, painted with big white letters, CHILDREN.

A cameraman hunches to his tripod. Under blasted trees,
in flowerbeds of debris, hidden seeds are turning to the light.

Lithuanian pianist Darius Mazintas has performed Chopin's nocturnes in front of Irpin's destroyed House of Culture. Sky News, 28/4/22